

REMARKS

Applicant would like to thank the Examiner for the careful consideration given the present application. The application has been carefully reviewed in light of the Office action, and amended as necessary to more clearly and particularly describe the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

Initially, Applicant would like to thank the Examiner for taking the time to conduct a telephone interview with the undersigned attorney.

Claims 12, 14, 17, and 18 were indicated as allowed. Claim 19 was indicated as containing allowable subject matter and would be allowed if rewritten in independent form, including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. It is submitted that the present Amendment does not affect the allowable status of the above claims, and as such, the claims will not be discussed further herein.

Claims 1-3 and 11 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kunz et al. (U.S. Pat. 4,925,218) in view of Kumagai et al. (JP 02004190755). Claim 4 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kunz and Kumagai as applied to claims 1-3 and 11, and further in view of Heilemann (U.S. Pat. 3,948,247).

All of the pending rejections rely on Kumagai. However, Kumagai is only available as a reference as of its publication date, July 8, 2004. The present application was filed on September 3, 2003. Therefore, Kumagai is not available as a reference against the present application. Accordingly, the rejections based upon Kumagai should be withdrawn.

In light of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that the present application is in a condition for allowance and notice to that effect is hereby requested. If it is determined that the application is not in a condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to initiate a telephone interview with the undersigned attorney to expedite prosecution of the present application.

If there are any additional fees resulting from this communication, please charge same to our Deposit Account No. 18-0160, our Order No. SHM-14986.

Respectfully submitted,

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